

CHILDREN of the WILD



EDWIN WILLARD DEMING

CHILDREN OF THE WILD. \$1.75 NET

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RENDERING

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BY EDWIN WILLARD DEMING

AND WITH INDIAN FOLK-LORE STORIES FOR CHILDREN

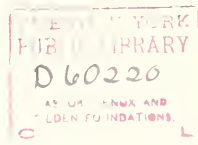
BY THERESE O. DEMING



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TO OUR TWO LITTLE DAUGHTERS
ALDEN AND KATHRYN
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



ALDEN AND KATHRYN
DAUGHTERS OF
ALDEN AND KATHRYN

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How a Mother Bear Saved a Little Red Baby.

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One day a young Indian hunter took an Indian maiden for his wife, and the two started off for the mountains, to hunt. They were very successful in getting furs and skins, and there had come to them a dear little black-haired, black-eyed baby boy.

The little boy was about two years old, when



the papa and mama decided to return to their home. All the things were packed; the papa lifted the baby to the mother's back; and off they started.

One morning the papa said: "We will stay here. I see many

bear-tracks, and I must get a big bear."

The mother prepared to stay, and, while she was busy, the boy played around the lodge; but, when she looked up from her work, the baby was gone.

"He has gone into the lodge to sleep," thought the woman.

Soon the papa returned and asked for his boy.

"He has gone into the lodge to sleep," answered the mother.

When the dish of dried-meat stew was set on the mat, for the father to eat, he said:

"The boy must be hungry, I will call him. Come, little warrior, eat! Father wants to see his little hunter." The baby did not answer, so the hunter went to get his boy; but the baby was not in the lodge.

The meal was forgotten, and both started to search for him.

The baby had played around the lodge for a long time, and he saw the little birds flying about. It was late in the autumn, and the dead leaves were lying all over the ground. As the little fellow trotted through them, he thought they were singing to him; so he talked to them in his baby language, and they became his friends.

He went on and on, as long as he heard the song of the leaves and the chattering of the little birds. Often little rabbits jumped across his path; they were not afraid of such a little fellow and sat upon their haunches to see what new kind of animal he might be.

By and by, the birds went to sleep; the forest became dark; and the little boy could not see. Then he thought of his mama and papa and began to cry.

When a little child cries because he is hungry, his voice often sounds like that of a baby bear.

A big mama bear was just coming through the leaves, and, when she heard the baby crying, she began to hunt for what she thought was a lost baby bear, and at last she found him.

She took him in her arms and curled her furry

body around him, so that he should be warm, and he stopped crying and fell sound asleep.

When the little fellow awakened in the morning, he seemed contented.

The mother bear was sure this funny little bear was hungry, so she tried to get the baby to follow her, but he did not understand. She went to the little boy's side, raised herself on her hind legs, and walked away, just as she wanted the baby to do; but the boy thought this was so funny that he only laughed.

When the bear saw that the baby did not follow her, she went back on her four legs and started over again, and this she did until the boy understood and trotted after her. As long as the baby followed, the mother bear went right on, but when he stopped she went back to get him again.



At last they reached the beech-nut grove, and the mother bear took her big paw and brushed away the leaves until she found many beech-nuts. The baby saw the mama bear take a mouthful of nuts and eat them; so he thought he would try some too. How good they tasted to the hungry baby.

Bye and bye the bear coaxed the baby to a streamlet, put her mouth to the water and drank; then baby got down on his hands and knees and drank as he saw the bear do.

When night came on the bear took the child to her cave in the mountain, took him in her arms and kept him warm until morning.

The boy was happy, and he did not miss his mother and father who had searched, as they thought, all through the forests. They looked for many days without success and at last started for their home, mourning. They thought their baby must have died of hunger and cold, or else the wild beasts had eaten it.

The mother told her people what had happened and asked, "What shall we do?" "Go ask the wizard,—he will know, for he is a very wise man."

The mother and father took furs and skins as presents, and went to the wizard's hut. He was sitting before a low fire, stirring herbs for medicine. "O grandfather," begged the unhappy mother, "tell me is our little one dead, or is he still alive?"

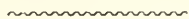
The old man answered : "Your child is alive, he is well ; go into the forest, search, and you will find him."

The mother and father hurried, and all the people followed to the camp where the baby had been lost ; then men, women, and children hunted in all directions.

One day an Indian reached the beech-nut grove, where the bear was gathering nuts ; she led the way to her cave, and there was the lost baby.

The boy grew up to be a great hunter ; but he always respected the bears and would never hurt or kill them, for they had saved his baby life.

## Why Ducks Have Short Tails and the Coon Must Go Barefooted.



Ever since the coon was made small he has played all sorts of tricks on the animal people, to get the kind of food he liked best. Once he caught a frog sitting upon a rock by the side of a lake. In the lake lived many little fish, and the coon wanted them ; so he told the frog to go down into the water and tell the fish to shut their eyes and swim about in the warm, spring sunshine.

“If you promise to do as I say,” said the coon, “I will let you go.”

Of course the frog did not want to be

eaten ; so he promised, and down he went into the water and sent the poor little fish to be eaten by the hungry coon. They swam to the top, and, before any of them knew what was happening, the coon had eaten all he wanted. That was why the fish became enemies of the frog, and now the fish eat frogs whenever they catch them.

After the coon had eaten all the breakfast he



wanted, he went to sleep and did not awaken all day until it was getting dark ; then he opened his eyes and hurried to find his supper, for he was hungry again. " I will look for a frog," he thought, and hunted all around the lake ; but he could not find one. Then he put his hands into all the little holes around the edge, and still he could not catch a frog.

" I must have some more fish," said the coon. " Frogs, frogs !" but the frogs were afraid to come and only answered, " croak, croak."

" They say, ' Drink ! Drink ! ' " thought the coon, and he went to the water to drink. Then he called again.

" Croak, croak, croak," answered the frogs.

" Why do you say, ' drink more water ' ? I cannot drink any more, I am hungry ! "

" Croak, croak, croak," answered the frogs.

" I will not listen to your stupid, ' Croak, croak, croak,' I am hungry ! " called the coon impatiently.

As the coon started to go away, he looked far out on the lake, and there he saw some ducks swimming about, with their beautiful long tails spread out on top of the water. Ducks had long tails in those days, and they were very proud of them. " I shall get some supper now," thought the delighted coon. " I will play a trick on those vain old ducks." So he built a good big fire on top of a little ridge, and then he lay down, pretending to be dead. He knew the inquisitive ducks would want to find out what it all might mean. Pretty soon the ducks saw the fire

and started for the shore. They stopped every little while to eat something floating on top of the water—perhaps a frog, some wild celery or rice—and it took them a long time. When they finally reached the shore they looked around. Everything seemed all right there; so they shook the water off their backs, settled their feathers and then shook their fine long tails.

“Quack,” said the leader. That surely meant, “Follow me,” in their language, for all the ducks fol-

lowed, and such a quacking you never heard! They were not at all polite; but all talked together, each trying to tell first what that strange light might mean.

In the mean while the big fire the coon had built began to spread. It got closer and closer to the coon; but he did not dare move, lest he should frighten the ducks.

“If they will only hurry! This fire is burning my feet. I can stand it no longer!” and up jumped the coon on the rocks. Then he ran as fast as he could go.





“Quack!” cried the leader. “Quack,” answered the others, and they ran as fast as their waddling little legs would carry them. The coon kept getting nearer and nearer. He could run much faster than the ducks, and he would have caught them if the fire had not got quite so hot. As it was he just caught the leader by his beautiful long tail. The duck was so anxious to get away that he pulled as hard as he could, and the tail came out. Since that day ducks have short tails.

A little Indian village was not far away, and, when the boys saw this big fire on top of a hill in the woods, they hurried out to see what it might mean. When they reached the lake, they saw the coon standing there with a handful of feathers, while the ducks and their leader who had lost his beautiful tail were swimming off. How the boys did laugh! and when they looked at the coon's hands and feet, they were bare. He had left the hair and skin wherever he had jumped on the rocks.

“Now you will always have to go barefooted, because you play so many mean tricks on the little animal people who are weaker than you are.” And the coon has had to go barefooted ever since as a punishment.

The hair and skin that he left upon the rocks started to grow, and now people who do not know what they really are, call them lichens and mosses.





 ELDORADO



## The Old Woman and the Moose-Snake.

In a little village, on the shore of a great lake, lived a poor old Indian woman. She had no friends to love her, and, because she was so poor, nobody would have anything to do with her.

One day, while she was sitting alone on the shore

of the lake, she saw the great moose-snake (M'sas-sook) stick his head out of the water. She was not afraid of him, because he was always good to the Indians; but she knew there would be a great storm, for, whenever



the snake rose straight out of the water, the thunder and lightning came down to drive him back again.

M'sas-sook (king of the waters) had a gold medal on each side of his head. The old woman saw them shine, and she thought: "If I had those bright pieces from the head of the moose-snake, I should always have good luck. I will ask him for them." That night, the old woman did not return to her hut, but went into the forests and waited on the shore of a small lake, through which she knew the moose-snake would have to pass, on his way over the mountains, as he travelled from one body of water to another

She could only think of her troubles :—" How lonely I am ; I have no friends to comfort me, and, if it were not for my poor bark hut, the north winds would freeze me, or the wild beasts would devour me. M'sas-sook will take pity when he hears my story ; he is always good to the Indians. What is that noise !" She turned and saw the great snake, coming toward her. She was frightened when she saw him, with his great moose-horns and big, round, snake body, and felt like running away ; but she knew he would not hurt her.

M'sas-sook saw the woman, as he was about to enter the lake.

" What do you want of me ? " he asked.

M'sas-sook, give me the golden medals from your head. I need them very much ; all my people dislike me because I am poor, and they will have nothing to do with me. If you will give me your medals, I shall be happy, and my people will be kind to me. Please give me the medals !

" I will let you take one of my medals, but I must keep the other," said M'sas-sook, and the poor woman took one of the medals from the head of the great moose-snake. She thanked him for his kindness and started for her village. She was a very happy old woman, and she thought as she hurried along, " Now my people will love me, and I shall have friends."

Night overtook her before she was out of the woods ; so she lay down on the bank of a lake to rest. She was tired and soon fell fast asleep ; but, suddenly she sat up and was wide awake in a moment. She







heard a strange noise ; what could it mean ? All around her, staring through the darkness, were the bright eyes of many wild animals. The old woman was terribly frightened.

“What do you want of me ?” she asked. “You have one of the medals from the head of the moose-snake, and we have come to help you,” answered a voice from one of the animals.

“You can do nothing for me, you are only animals, and I am a poor, lonely old woman.”

“We can give you furs and skins ; then you will be rich among your people,” answered the voice, and each of the animals gave the woman meat and furs, so she should have plenty. Then they stared at her out of the darkness.

Though she knew M'sas-sook had sent the animals, the old woman was afraid. She gladly welcomed the grey dawn, when she bade the animal people good-bye, and started on her journey home, this time with arms full of riches.

Her people were surprised when she entered the village, and treated her more kindly. She told how M'sas-sook had let her take one of his medals, and then they knew she would always have plenty of everything.

When darkness came again, she went to her poor





hut to sleep. She would not leave it, though many of her people asked her to; for this bark hut had been her only friend, and she would always love it. With the night came the many mysterious animals and the great, staring eyes, looking out of the darkness. "What do you want of me this time?" asked the woman. "You have one of the medals from the head of M'sas-sook, and we have come to help you," answered a voice from one of the animals.

"But, you gave me many things last night, and I am rich among my people now!"

As they had done the night before, the animals left many furs, skins, and a great deal of meat. Then they stayed, staring through the night, until the morning light broke through the darkness, when they disappeared, and the woman did not know where they had come from, nor where they had gone. When the people came to see her, they saw all the things M'sas-sook had sent.

The old woman wore the medal about her neck, fastened to a buckskin string, so that she should not lose it. She loved to walk through the village and hear the happy laughter of the children as they hurried to greet her. Everybody and everything loved her; even the dogs would try to push the children aside in their eagerness to be close to her, and she could never thank the great snake enough for all her happiness.

## Who Makes the Echo ?

Turtle-dove, a young Indian mother, had two little children whom she loved very dearly. When she went into the forests to gather herbs and berries, she always took them with her. She started for the forests very early one morning and went farther than usual. Because she was tired from carrying her sleeping child on her back, she gave him to his little



sister and put her under a sage bush. "Take care of your brother for me ; I will be back soon," said the mother, and the child promised she

would be kind to the little baby.

The mother wandered away and had gone some distance, when the little girl saw an old woman, standing in front of her.

"Is that your baby brother?" asked the old woman.

The little girl was afraid ; she thought the woman must be a witch, and witches took little boys away. She held her little brother close and answered, " No, this is my little sister."

"You naughty, naughty child, don't you know it

is very wrong for little girls to say what is not true?" and the old witch looked so angry, that the little girl was frightened; then the old woman seized the baby brother and ran off with him.

She carried him to her home, far up in the mountain, and laid him on the ground. "I have always wanted a husband," said the witch. "I will make this baby into a man, then I will marry him."

She took the baby by one little leg and pulled and pulled, until it was very long; then she took the other leg and stretched it, until both legs were the same length. The witch had made the baby into a tall man, but he still had his baby arms; so she caught him by the shoulders with one hand and with the other pulled an arm. It grew longer and longer, and she took the baby's other arm and pulled it in the same way; and soon her husband had long arms!

Meanwhile Turtle-dove went back and found her little daughter alone, sitting under the sage bush, crying very hard because the baby was gone.

"Where is my baby?" asked the poor mother.

"The witch took him away from me," answered the little girl. The mother was almost crazy.

Turtle-dove's brother, the Eagle, travelled day and night over all the land, and at last he heard a strange voice. He went nearer and saw Sage-cock, the witch's husband. Then he returned and told the mother what he had seen and heard.

"If it be my baby, he will know my voice,"



REIDEMING



said the mother, and she hurried to the place and climbed a cedar tree and began to mourn.

When the boy heard the sound of his mother's voice, he cried : "I hear my mother ; my mother is calling me !" Then the witch turned him back into a baby and hid him in a hollow tree ; and she too got into it. "They will never look here for us," she thought.

"Sister," said the eagle, "before long the old woman will be hungry ; then they will have to leave their hiding-place. I will put a rabbit in the top of this tree, and then I will cut off the bark and thin the branches, so that the witch will have a hard time climbing for the food."

The witch smelled the food and came out to find it. She tried to climb the tree, but it was very slippery, and she would climb up a little way, only to slip back again.

While the witch was trying to get the food, the eagle took the baby from his hiding-place and carried him to the delighted mother ; then he flew up into the clouds and ordered a storm.

When the witch returned and found the baby gone, she was angry and looked around for tracks ; the rain had washed them all away, but it did not hide the three feathers the eagle had dropped.





“Now I know!” cried the witch; “it was the eagle. I must go to my grandfather, the rattlesnake, for protection.”

The rattlesnake was asleep on a rock, and did not want to be disturbed, so when the witch called him, he answered, “Go back to your home; I do not want you here!”

“Oh, help me, grandfather, or the eagle will catch me!” begged the witch.

“Crawl into my stomach.” The old witch did as he told her, and then, the rattlesnake became so ill that he feared he should die. He told her to come out again, but she would not. At last, in his terrible pain, he crawled out of his skin and left the witch inside. When she found she could not get out of the skin, she rolled about and hid in the rocks.

Since that day, the rattlesnakes lose their skins every year.

The eagle was hunting for the old witch, and he kept calling, “Old witch, old witch! Where are you?” and the old witch mocked everything he said, rolling farther and farther away all the time, so that he could not find her.

Since then little Indian children say it is only ignorant people who think they hear the echo and do not know it is only the angry witches they hear, mocking them; because the witches can never frighten or carry off children any more. They cannot even travel about in the sunshine, for they always have to stay in their rattlesnake-skin homes.



## The Coyote Bringing Fire to the Red People.

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There was once a time when the Indians had no fire, but had to live on herbs, berries, plants and such other things as could be eaten raw. They did not eat fish or flesh, because they had no fire to cook with.

When the cold winter came, the people could not keep warm, and asked the animal people for some

of their fire ;
but the animals had none to give.



The red people knew where fire was kept ;
but no man had ever dared

go to the place where the Great Spirit had hidden it in a casket and had set two old hags on guard, so that man could not steal it.

Now it happened that man had been very kind to the coyote in his hour of need ; so the coyote promised to bring the much-needed fire to man, and called together all the animals. He told them how he planned to get fire and asked if they would help him, and as all the animals were willing, he selected one of each kind, from the cougar down to the poor little frog.

“I will station you all along the trail, from the

settlement of man to the distant home of the Great Spirit, where the hags guard the fire," said the coyote. "The frog, because he is weakest, shall be stationed nearest home, and so in turn each animal, until the cougar shall have his post nearest the fire — for you are stronger than the others, cougar. I will steal the fire and run with it to the cougar; he will take it and pass it on; and each animal, in turn, will run his best, so that the old hags cannot get the fire away from him."

Then the coyote went to the Indian camp and took one of the red men with him. He placed him under a hill near the old hags' cabin, went to the door, and knocked.

One of the old hags opened the door, and the coyote said, "Good evening."

"Good evening," answered the old woman.

"It is a cold night. Will you not let me come in and sit by your fire?"

"Yes; come in," and the coyote went in and stretched himself before the fire. He reached his nose toward the warm blaze, sniffed the heat, and felt very comfortable. Then he stretched his head along his forepaws and pretended to sleep.

He kept the corner of one eye open to watch the hags; but, as they had been set by the Great Spirit to watch the fire, they never slept day or night. Thus the coyote's night of watching and thinking was all to no purpose; he might as well have slept.



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Next morning he went out to the Indian whom he had hidden under the hill, and said : " I have not been successful ; the hags watch the fire all the time. I will go back again, and, when I am in the cabin, you must make a rush as if you were going to steal some fire, and then, while they are trying to keep you back, I will steal it."

That night the coyote went back again. He knocked, and when he asked to go in again the hags said he might ; for they did not think a coyote could steal fire.

He stood close to the casket and, when the Indian made a great rush toward the cabin, the coyote seized a brand of fire in his teeth and ran out of the other door.



He skimmed over the ground ; but the old hags saw the sparks flying and gave chase. They gained on him fast, and he was all out of breath, when he reached the cougar, who did not lose an instant, but ran to the next animal—the old hags always following, and each animal having very little time to spare before the hags came up.

Next to the last came the ground squirrel. He snatched the burning brand from the rabbit, just as the hags came up, and he almost flew along. He

went so fast that his tail caught fire, and, as he held it curled over his back to keep it out of his way, it burned a black spot behind his shoulders, which is there to this day.

He was almost out of breath and so tired he could not take another step, when he reached the frog. The hags were almost at his heels. The frog opened his mouth very wide, and the squirrel threw the fire into it. He swallowed it at a gulp and then turned to take a great jump, for the poor fellow could not run.

The hags were so close behind that they seized him by the tail and tweaked it off, for he was a tadpole then, and that is the reason frogs have no tails to this day.

The hags were sure of capturing their fire then ; but, in the little moment they gave the frog, he jumped into the water and swam under it for a long time—as long as he could possibly hold his breath. Then he came up and spat the fire into a log of drift-wood, where it has staid ever since.

After that when the Indians wanted fire they needed only to rub two sticks together, and the fire came forth.

The Gratitude of Rabbit.

Poor little rabbit had lost his parents, and he was all alone in the world. He was such a tiny little fellow that he could not take care of himself or find anything to eat.



An old woman was passing his home one day, and she heard baby rabbit crying.

"What is the matter?" she asked, and he answered, "I am alone and have no one to help me get anything to eat. I am so hungry!"

The woman took pity on the little fellow and carried him home with her. "I have not much," she said; "but I can always share what I have with a fellow sufferer."

She fed baby rabbit and grew to be very fond of him. Little rabbit always lived with her, and he grew and grew until he was very big; but he never helped the woman bring food home—perhaps because she did not ask him.

"What could a poor little fellow like that do?" thought she.

As the years rolled by, the woman kept getting older and older, until it was very hard for her to supply the tiniest bit of food, or to gather a few small twigs for the fire.

One day, after she had with difficulty stored up a small supply of food and firewood, she said to rabbit:

"My son, I am getting very old, I cannot gather any more herbs and berries, and, after we have eaten what I have here, we shall have to starve; but let us enjoy what we have. Then we can die together."

So they lived on the little supply, and, when all was gone and the fire out, rabbit said: "Mother, you were kind to me in my time of need; now I will help take care of you. I will catch you some fish if you will let me go.

The old woman said he might try; but she thought: "How can little rabbit catch fish?"

Rabbit took the net and set it in a lake where he knew there were many fish; then he returned home for the night, bringing some berries for the old woman to eat. Next morning, very early, he started for the lake. When he reached his net, he lifted one corner and found there was a fish in every mesh. He shook out some, for he would not need so many at once, and then he pulled in the net, gathered together the fish, and started for home.

"See, mother, I have brought you many fish; now we shall not starve for I can help you!" cried



REDEMPTION. 1900. BY FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY.
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rabbit as he neared the hut. "That is nice," answered the woman; "but our fire is out, and we cannot cook them." "I will get you some fire, while you clean the fish." So rabbit bade the woman good-bye and started for the river, carrying his net under his arm.

When rabbit reached the river, he called the big fish and told them to make a bridge, so that he could cross the water. The fish did as rabbit said, and, after he was on the other side, he told the fish to swim away; then he jumped into the water, so that his fur should be wet, and lay down on the bank, pretending to be dead.

He was not very far from an Indian village, and soon the Indian children came to play on the sandy bank. One of the boys found rabbit, carried him home; and told where he had found him.

"Carry him to the iron kettle, where there is a big fire," said the father, and the boy put rabbit down to skin him.



Poor rabbit was terribly frightened and opened just a corner of one eye to see if there were any way to escape. He saw a big round hole right in the

top of the tepee. Then he said, very softly: "Fire, throw a spark upon my net!" Instantly the firewood snapped, and a great spark set his net on fire. Rabbit was afraid of the fire; but he sprang out of the hole in the top of the tepee and pulled the net out after him.

When the Indians saw they had been outwitted by rabbit, they gave chase, and the little fellow had to run faster and faster, so that when he came to the bank of the river he could not stop himself but gave one great leap and jumped clear over the river, and the Indians could not catch him. Then he examined his net, and the fire was still smouldering; so he hurried home, and the old woman fanned it back to life again. Then rabbit gathered twigs and they kept the fire burning.

So it was that rabbit showed his gratitude to the old woman who had been kind to him.

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